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ABSTRACT

This is the first in a series of 3 bulletins dealing with university-community relationships. This bulletin examines the role of the university in contemporary American life and describes some innovative programs in university-community cooperation. The second bulletin will discuss some of the areas in which cooperation exists between the University of Nebraska and the city of Lincoln. The third will deal with the response of the University of Nebraska to urban problems within the state. The information was obtained from responses to letters of inquiry sent to several universities and national organizations. This report notes that because of population growth and the many problems of urbanization, it is necessary for the university to become actively involved in public affairs and service, in addition to fulfilling its traditional roles. Technical expertise alone, however, is not enough, for it is necessary to resolve conflicting values and interests. An example of government-university cooperation is Oklahoma University's "Professor of the City" program in which faculty advised and assisted the local governments in working on the city's ills. The Institute for Excellence in State Government at the University of North Carolina was developed to do research on problems in state government. Internship programs in Virginia and West Virginia have been established for college students or recent graduates interested in careers within the state government. (DS)

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THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY IN THE COMMUNITY

Because of two contemporary problems--(1) campus unrest, and (2) the crisis in the cities, we think it timely to examine the role of the publicly-supported university in the community. With this in mind we have sent letters of inquiry to all of the "Big Eight" cities and universities, to other selected university-city communities, and to appropriate national organizations. Among the questions we have asked are the following:

University-Community Cooperation

1. What do you conceive to be the university's role in your community?
2. In what areas is university-community cooperation especially good?
3. In what areas do problems exist?
4. Does any formal structure exist in your community for university-community cooperation?

Services

1. What services does the university offer to the community?
2. What services does the community offer the university?
3. Have you experienced any especially innovative programs in university-community cooperation?

University As Corporate Citizen

1. What is the population of your city?
2. Of your university?
3. At what point must a municipal government ask compensation for its services (in-lieu-of-tax-payment) from the university? Is this determined on the basis of a university-city population ratio or in some other way?
4. Does your city receive such compensation?
5. What codes govern university building in your city?
6. Does the university comply with city building codes, fire prevention codes, and zoning ordinances?

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This is the first of a series of bulletins dealing with university-city relationships. In this bulletin we shall examine the university's role in contemporary American life and describe innovative programs of university-community cooperation.

The University's Role

Traditionally the role of the university has been to extend the "frontiers of knowledge" through research and to transmit knowledge through teaching. According to Cornell University's president, James A. Perkins, the university has a third function--to apply knowledge through public service. This third function is implicit in the provisions of Title One of the Higher Education Act of 1965 which seems to suggest that the university make a direct contribution to the solution of urban problems through active participation in community life. In a recent presentation before the National University Extension Association, Dr. C. J. Roberts and Dr. Elden E. Jacobson, both of whom are associated with the Tulsa Professors of the City program, discuss the implications of such active involvment. They quote J. Martin Klotsche as adding to the list of familiar urban problems of ". . . smoke, water pollution, sewage, health, education, traffic and transportation, segregation and race, crime and property" the problems of "constantly increasing pressures for expanded public services; outdated political institutions to deal with the economic and social realities of modern urban society; a public apathy to metropolitan affairs, and an absence of imaginative, long-range planning."[1]

Are these problems really so acute? Is all of this relevant in Lincoln and Omaha, Nebraska? Certainly we do not have the problems of congestion faced by the great urban corridors developing along both coasts. And yet we are confronted with the problems of (1) an exodus from rural to urban areas; and (2) growth in population in our urban centers with the emergence of many of the problems of other American cities--the problems experienced by racial minorities, the problems of discovering ways to educate functional illiterates, the problems of inadequate housing, the problems of crime and delinquency. In addition we are discovering that the problems of the city cannot be escaped by a flight to the suburbs or to rural areas on the city's "fringe". Suburban and "fringe" populations demand services that present rurally-oriented units of local government cannot adequately provide; increases in land-value taxes mitigate against the "good life" for which the flight from the city was made; the frustrations we associate with the automobile are sometimes greater for those who "commute"; polluted rivers are not magically purified at the city's boundaries but flow through suburb and "fringe" as well. And if our population, nationally, is to reach 300,000,000 within the next generation, as we are told it will, we will soon discover that we are running out of places to flee. Thus we have no choice but to solve the problems of the city where they exist. What, then, is the university's role in the solution of these problems?

Universities, generally, have a good deal to their credit in the area of community service. For example, the work of university extension services is well known. What other services has the university provided?

Dr. Jacobson and Dr. Roberts state that, in the years immediately preceding the enactment of the Higher Education Act of 1965, 75% of university research funds came from the federal government. These funds were used primarily in the physical and biomedical sciences in projects related to defense and public health. Former President Kerr of the University of California has suggested that the emphasis on defense, health, and space exploration has resulted in a maze of grants, subsidies and research projects

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[1] J. Martin Klotsche, The Urban University, p. 32.

with a considerable imbalance in the allocation of funds. The implication is that the humanities and the social sciences have been somewhat neglected. The assumption in Title One of the Higher Education Act seems to be that the liaison of government and university in solving problems in the technical sciences might be useful in solving the problems of contemporary urban life. Two difficulties immediately present themselves in applying this approach. The first is that obviously technical expertise is not enough. The second is that implicit in the solution of urban problems is the resolution of conflicting values and interests. For the university to become actively involved with the public and private sector of the community in policy-making (in addition to research) requires a departure from its traditional role. Dr. Roberts and Dr. Jacobson illustrate the first problem, the inadequacy of technical expertise, in the following way: The technical means for eliminating venereal disease has been cheaply and readily available for years. However, the incidence of venereal disease continues to rise, especially among the disadvantaged. Probably one of the most obvious examples of the second problem, the necessity for resolving conflicting values and interests, involves traffic and transportation. The development of mass transit systems would help to alleviate the problems of congestion, air pollution, traffic accidents, expenditures for streets and highways, and the ever-increasing devouring of land for streets, highways, and parking space. However, those who advocate the development of mass transit systems are immediately in conflict with the individual auto owner and, more significantly, with the powerful auto and oil industries. To support one group is to alienate another. Thus it appears that in dealing with the means to solve the many complex human problems of an urban society we have not reached a national consensus.

In the light of these problems can the university afford to do more than offer its research facility in an atmosphere of detachment? On the other hand, can it afford to do less?

Professors of the City: An Innovative Program

With a grant from the Ford Foundation the University of Oklahoma, in 1962, established urban extension services in five Oklahoma cities. The emphasis in this program was on establishing closer university-community relations and discovering ways for developing an urban science. When Ford Foundation funding terminated in 1964 the University of Oklahoma underwrote permanent university extension services in three cities. One of these cities was Tulsa and in the spring of 1966 the Tulsa Professors of the City program was born. The role of each Professor of the City is that of scientist in residence in the city with a ". . .client/counselor relationship with the city. As a counselor, the Professor is expected to advise, consult, diagnose, prescribe, and even to participate in treatment."[1] At the present time Professors of the City are studying urban science in five general areas: (1) information/communication, (2) leadership training and youth culture, (3) public health, (4) political science, and (5) economics. The program has met with enthusiastic response from the City of Tulsa and, in August, 1967, won one of the ten annual awards for intergovernmental urban development.

The emphasis of the program has been to view the city as a whole and to apply an inter-disciplinary approach to the solution of its problems. Some examples of specific projects follow:

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[1] C. J. Roberts, Professor of the City: Two Years Later, p. 10.

A city personnel manager was concerned because some city employees did not understand their own role as public servants in a modern, progressing city. He consulted with Professors of the City and asked that they prepare a training course to help solve this problem. An eight-day course consisting of readings with discussion, analysis of workday schedules, case studies based on actual situations, and an administrative practicum was presented. "The administrative practicum, using the "In Basket" technique, required resolving within a strict time limit a series of practical administrative crises. Solutions and procedures in problem-solving were later examined at group critique sessions. The objective was to discover more efficient approaches to problem solving and to appreciate the effects of attitudes and personality in the individual administrator's performance."[1]

A second example involved a Professor of the City, serving on a Youth Advisory Committee, who advised against a new building in favor of an activity important to the young people being served. A successful program in the existing building resulted from the Professor's participation in the formulation of policy, based on the research findings of the Professors of the City.

A third research project involved a Professor of the City working with a high school distributive education class in assessing the recreational needs of Tulsa. The students participated in research using questionnaires and computer analysis. In addition to learning about Tulsa's recreational needs, the students learned research techniques and the potential of computers and data processing.

Finally, in preparing a Model Cities proposal, which resulted in a $137,000 federal grant, the Professors of the City were able to describe the city's deterioration, assess resources, predict needs, and recommend a comprehensive course of action.

Institutes for Excellence in State Government

In considering the relationship of the university to the larger community, an especially innovative program is the institute for Excellence in State Government at the University of North Carolina. The Institute was developed under the leadership of former North Carolina Governor Terry Sanford with financial support from the Ford and Carnegie Foundations. The Institute at North Carolina is a pilot program and it is hoped that similar institutes will be developed in several states. The purpose of each institute is to do research on problems in state government, to develop tools and techniques for problem-solving, and to make recommendations to the States. Each institute is to be university based, to have a small professional staff, to be governed by a board of trustees including ex-Governors and other citizens experienced in state government, and to exist for five years only.[1]

Internship Programs

Another cooperative effort between state government and colleges and universities is the internship programs in Virginia and West Virginia. Virginia has allocated five intern jobs in its 1968-70 budget for college students or recent graduates interested in careers with the state government. The West Virginia program is sponsored by the Governor's Office and the American Political Science Association and provides internships for graduate students in public administration at West Virginia University.[2]

The above are but a few examples of new approaches in university-government cooperative efforts in solving modern problems. The second in this series of bulletins

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[1]Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Ninth Annual Report, Jan. 31, 1968, p.6.

[2]The Council of State Governments, State Government News, June, 1968, p. 4.

will discuss the following questions:

1. What cooperative arrangements exist between the University of Nebraska and the City of Lincoln?
2. Between the University and the larger community?
3. What programs and services does the University of Nebraska now provide for the community?
4. What programs and services does the community provide the University?
5. To what extent is the University involved in public policy-making?

The third in this series of bulletins will explore some aspects of the following:

1. What problems exist in a cooperative approach to community problems?
2. In what areas could University-City cooperation be improved?
3. What services might the community offer the University and the University offer the community which are not now being provided?

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